exchange machine have not been completed in Jangla Telephone Exchange situated in Shimla district despite the approval of Government;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) by when it is likely to be completed; and

(d) whether Government propose to instruct the concerned Assistant Engineer (Telecommunications) to inspect the telephone exchange once in a week so that telecommunication system continue to work smoothly and telephone subscribers get a proper service?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (c) One regular mazdoor has been posted at Jangla exchange.

Generator for Jangla Telephone Exchange has been planned during the year 2003-04.

Two units of 256 P C-DOT RAXs are working at Jangla, which shall be converted to 496 lines Access Network RAXs during the current financial year.

(d) Sub Divisional Officer Incharge has been instructed specifically to ensure proper and fault free service to the subscribers of the Jangla Exchange.

Fulfilment of obligation by private operators

1187. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the licence agreement with private operators stipulated that basic telecom service operators were to provide a minimum of 10 per cent of their total commitments as VPTs;

(b) if so, whether the private operators fulfilled their obligations since commencement of their operation;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the details of the loss of amount suffered by Government along with the details of the action taken against the defaulting private operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. In respect of licence agreement signed with six private basic telephone service operators with effective date in 1997-98, it was stipulated to provide a minimum 10% of total Direct Exchange Lines (DELs) to be commissioned as Village Public Telephones (VPTs). This percentage was translated into absolute terms based on bid/tender documents keeping in view the committed targets for DELs and the figures for number of uncovered villages as indicated in the tender documents.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

(d) Delay in commissioning of VPTs has deprived the people of the concerned villages of telecommunication coverage facility. Liquidated damage charges to the tune of Rs. 53.75 crores were recovered from six operators for the delay in commissioning of service as well as for the delay in provisions of DELs and VPTs.

Gram Sanchar Sevak

1188. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether "Gram Sanchar Sevak" (GSS) scheme launched recently, by Government has received encouraging response from the rural households;

(b) if so, names of the telecom districts in Orissa where GSS scheme has been launched; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to convert this project into a full-fledged scheme across the country especially in remote areas of the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Gram Sanchar Sevak (GSS) scheme has been launched in Balasore, Baripada, Bhubaneshwar, Bolangir, Cuttack, Dhenkanal,